

✓ Tape 8

Side A, 4 - 4 1/16

15 OCT 1979

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

FROM:

D C I

SUBJECT:

I just read the latest classified memo on comparisons of US and USSR defense spending. I would like to boil that down into what I can say when asked how we compare. It seems to me ~~it's~~ ~~between~~ the Soviets are spending between 30 and 50 percent more on defense than we depending on whether you counted in rubles or dollars. Is that correct?

25X1

RESPONSE

✓ ATTACHED →

NFAC # 5561-79 + SR 79-10130, Sept 79

Subject: Summary of "A Dollar Cost  
Comparison of Soviet + U.S. Defense  
Activities, 1968-78"

# Why the Russians Stood Fast

*The balance of power has shifted and Soviet leaders see no need to accept humiliation in these circumstances. New-found equality is too precious to sacrifice, even at the cost of a SALT agreement this year.*

Washington.

**SEVENTEEN YEARS** after the missile crisis of 1962, Soviet military forces in Cuba again have become the subject of controversy between the United States and the Soviet Union. But the outcome is quite different.

That is because the strategic balance between the U.S.S.R. and the United States has been altered, the United States cannot make a persuasive case that the Soviet Union has made any significant changes in its military presence in Cuba and the

By Herbert S. Dinerstein

United States is unwilling to put forward the possibility that it will use military force in Cuba to compel the Soviet Union and Cuba to accommodate its wishes.

In 1962, to put the case in simple terms, the Soviet Union had a clear legal right to put into Cuba whatever forces it chose. (And it pointed out before the missile crisis that the United States had installed similar facilities in countries bordering the Soviet Union.) But the United States judged that the continued presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba altered the strategic balance and constituted a threat to American security. On that basis, President Kennedy demanded that the Soviet Union withdraw its missiles, announcing that further missile shipments would be intercepted on the high seas, but making no further specific warnings should the U.S.S.R. not comply with his request.

President Kennedy was not invoking

international law, but the "higher law" of national security. By agreement with host countries, the United States had exercised its right to put its forces where it wanted, but it denied the same option to the Soviet Union on the grounds that American interests were threatened. This served to confirm the conviction of Soviet leaders that it was better to be stronger than weaker and that as long as they were weaker, the United States would not treat them as equals.

In 1962, the Soviet Union—unlike the United States—had only a rudimentary intercontinental missile capacity and the United States had overwhelming military superiority in the Caribbean. The Soviet Union could either comply with U.S. demands or stand pat and see if the United States would go beyond the blockade of Cuba. Soviet leaders rapidly complied with American wishes, probably because they realized that they were powerless to retaliate in kind to any of a number of measures that the United States could take in Cuba. They also may have feared that the United States might employ nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union, and, indeed, presented their retreat as a contribution to world peace.

But counsel was divided in the Soviet Union. Some argued that if the Soviet Union stood firm and insisted on its right to behave as the United States did, the United States would desist. But the decision to accede to American wishes carried the day and the terms of an agreement were worked out: The United States to declare that it would not invade Cuba, the withdrawal of the missiles to be monitored by the United Nations and presumably the Soviet military specialists in Cuba would disappear and the United States would

But an agreement was not reached because Fidel Castro refused, claiming that U.N. inspection teams in Cuba infringed on its sovereignty. Thus, President Carter was mistaken when he stated October 1 that "This direct threat to the United States [in 1962] ended with the Soviet agreement [italics added] to withdraw these nuclear weapons and a commitment not to introduce offensive weapons into Cuba thereafter."

Instead of a formal agreement there was understanding that Soviet missiles would be withdrawn, the United States would not invade Cuba and that Soviet SAM-2 anti-aircraft batteries would not interfere with American U-2 flights over Cuba to monitor the continued absence of Soviet missiles. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States is party to a formal agreement regulating its behavior as regards Cuba. Both have found it in their interests to preserve the essentials of common understanding reached in 1962, as they did in 1970 in discussions about the use of Cuban ports by Soviet submarines and about the mission of Soviet MiG-23s in Cuba last year.

Recently, U.S. intelligence analysts raised the possibility that Soviet troops in Cuba were now a combat brigade. This assessment leaked and Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, publicly announced it. The President and the Secretary of State then stated that the status quo was not acceptable.

Now, as before, Soviet leaders think they have the right to troops in Cuba, but, unlike 1962, they have not agreed to alter the disposition of